

The
Marchant

MARCHANT was ther with a
forked berd,
In mottelee, and hye on horse he sat;
Upon his heed a flaundryssh bevere
hat;
His bootes clasped faire & fetisly.
His resons he spak ful solempnely,
Sownynge alway thencrees of his wynnynge.
He wolde the see were kept for any thing
Bitwixe Middelburgh and Orewelle.
Wel koude he in eschaunge sheeldes selle.
This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette,
Ther wiste no wight that he was in dette,
So estatly was he of his governaunce,
With his bargaynes and with his chevysaunce,
for sothe he was a worthy man withalle,
But sooth to seyn, I noot how men hym calle.

The
Clerk of
Oxenford

CLERK ther was of Oxenford also,
That unto logyk hadde longe ygo.
And leene was his hors as is a rake,
And he nas nat right fat, I under-
take,
But looked holwe, and therto
sobrelly;

ful thredbare was his overeste courtepy,
for he hadde gotten hym yet no benefice,
Ne was so worldly for to have office,
for hym was levere have at his beddes heed
A twenty bookes, clad in blak or reed,
Of Aristotle and his philosophie,
Than robes riche, or fithele or gay sautrie;
But al be that he was a philosopre,
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre;
But al that he myghte of his freendes hente,
On bookes and his lernynge he it spent,
And bisily gan for the soules preye
Of hem that yaf hym wherwith to scoleye.
Of studie took he moost cure and moost heede,
Noght o word spak he moore than was neede,
And that was seyde in forme and reverence,
And short and quyk and ful of hy sentence.
Sownynge in moral vertu was his speche,
And gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche.

The Ser-
geant of
Lawe

SERGEANT of the Lawe, war
and wys,
That often hadde been at the parvyss,
Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.
Discreet he was, & of greet reverence;
He semed swich, hise wordes weren
so wise.

Justice he was ful often in assise,
By patente and by pleyn commissioun;
for his science, and for his heigh renoun
Of fees and robes hadde he many oon;
So greet a purchasour was nowher noon:
Al was fee symple to hym in effect,
His purchasyng myghte nat been infect.
Nowher so bisy a man as he ther nas,
And yet he semed bisier than he was.
In termes hadde he caas and doomes alle
That from the tyme of Kyng William were falle;
Therto he koude endite, and make a thyng,
Ther koude no wight pynchen at his writyng;
And every statut koude he pleyn by rote.

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He rood but hoomly in a medlee cote
Girt with a ceint of silk, with barres smale;
Of his array telle I no longer tale.

FRANKELEYN was in his com-
paignye.
Whit was his heed as is a dayesye,
Of his complexioun he was sang-
wyn.

Wel loved he by the morwe a sope
in wyn;
To lyven in delit was evere his wone,
for he was Epicurus owene sone,
That heeld opinioun that pleyn delit
Was verrailly felicitie parfyt.

An housholdere, and that a greet, was he;
Seint Julian was he in his contree;
His breed, his ale, was always after oon;
A better envyned man was nevere noon.
Withoute bake mete was nevere his hous,
Of fish and flessch, and that so plenteuous,
It snowed in his hous of mete and drynke,
Of alle deyntees that men koude thynke;

After the sondry sesons of the yer,
So chaunged he his mete and his soper.
ful many a fat partrich hadde he in muwe
And many a breem and many a luce in stuwe.
Wo was his cook but if his sauce were
Poynaunt and sharpe, and redy at his geere.
His table dormant in his halle alway
Stood redy covered al the longe day.
At sessionis ther was he lord and sire;
ful ofte tyme he was knyght of the shire.
An anlaas, and a gipsier al of silk,
Heeng at his girdel whit as morne milk.
A shirreve hadde he been and a countour;
Was nowher such a worthy vavasour.

AN Haberdasshere, and a Carpenter,
A Webbe, a Dyere, and a Tapyer,
And they were clothed alle in olyvere
Of a solempne & a greet fraternitee;
ful fresch and newe hir geere apiked
was;

Hir knyves were ychaped noght with bras,
But al with silver wrought ful clene and weel,
Hire girdles and hir pouches everydeel.
Wel semed ech of hem a fair burgeys
To sitten in a yeldehalle on a deys.
Everich, for the wisdom that he kan,
Was shaply for to been an alderman;
for catel hadde they ynogh, and rente,
And eek hir wyves wolde it wel assente;
And elles certeyn were they to blame.
It is ful fair to been ycleped Madame,
And goon to vigilies al bifore,
And have a mantel roialliche ybore.

COOK they hadde with hem for the
nones,
To boille the chicknes with the
marybones
And poudre marchant tart, and
galyngale;

Wel koude he knowe a draughte of London ale.
He koude rooste, and sethe, and broille, and frye,
Maken mortreux, and wel bake a pye;

The Ship-
man

But greet harm was it, as it thoughte me,
That on his shyne a mormal hadde he;
for blankmanger, that made he with the beste.

SHIPMAN was ther, wonynge fer
by weste;
for aught I woot, he was of Derte-
mouthe.

He rood upon a rouncey as he kouthe,
In a gowne of faldyng to the knce.
A daggere hangynge on a laas hadde he
Aboute his nekke under his arm adoun.
The hootte somer hadde maad his hewe al broun,
And certeinly he was a good felawe.
ful many a draughte of wyn had he ydrawe
fro Burdeuxward whil that the chapman sleepe;
Of nyce conscience took he no keepe;
If that he faught, and hadde the hyer hond,
By water he sente hem boon to every lond.
But of his craft to rekena wel his tydes,
His stresmes and his daungers hym bisides,
His herberwe and his moone, his lodemenage,
Ther nas noon swich from Hulle to Cartage.
Hardy he was, and wys to undertake;
With many a tempest hadde his berd been shake.
With alle the havenes as they were
from Gootlond to the Cape of fynystere,
And every cryke in Britaigne and in Spayne;
his barge ycleped was the Maudelayne.

The
Doctour
of Phisik

WHUS ther was a Doctour of Phi-
sik;
In al this world ne was ther noon
hym lik
To speke of phisik and of surgerye;
for he was grounded in astronomye;

he kepte his pacient a ful greet deel
In houres by his magyk naturel.
Wel koude he fortunen the ascendent
Of his ymages for his pacient.

He knew the cause of everich maladye,
Were it of hoot, or cold, or moyste, or drye,
And where engendred and of what humour;
He was a verray parfyt praktisour.
The cause yknowe, and of his harm the roote,
Anon he yaf the sike man his boote.
ful redy hadde he his apothecaries,
To sende him drogges and his letuaries,
for ech of hem made oother for to wynne,
hir frendshipe nas nat newe to bigynne.

Wel knew he the olde Esculapius,
And Deyscorides, and eek Rufus,
Olde Ypocras, Haly, and Galyen,
Serapion, Rasis, and Aveyen,
Averrois, Damascien, and Constantyn,
Bernard, and Gatesden, and Gilbertyn.
Of his diete mesurable was he,
for it was of no superfluitee,
But of greet norrisyng and digestible;
his studie was but litel on the Bible.
In sangwyn and in pers he clad was al,
Lyned with taffata and with sendal;
And yet he was but esy of dispence,
He kepte that he wan in pestilence,
for gold in phisik is a cordial,
Therefore he lovede gold in special.

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The Wif
of Bathe

GOOD wif was ther of biside Bathe,
But she was somdel deaf and that
was scathe.
Of clooth makynge she hadde swich
an haunt,

She passed hem of Ypres & of Gaunt.
In al the parisshe, wif ne was ther noon
That to the offrynge bifore hire sholde goon,
And if ther dide, certeyn so wrooth was she,
That she was out of alle charitee.
Hir coverchiefs ful fyne weren of ground,
I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound,
That on a Sonday weren upon hir heed.
Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed,
ful streite yteyd, and shoes ful moyste & newe;
Boold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe.
She was a worthy womman al hir lyve,
Housbondes at chirche dore she hadde fyve,
Withouten oother compaignye in youthe;
But therof nedeth nat to speke as nowthe;
And thries hadde she been at Jerusalem;
She hadde passed many a straunge strem;
At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne,
In Galice at Seint Jame, and at Coloigne;
She koude muchel of wandrynge by the weye.
Gat tothed was she, soothly for to seye.
Upon an amblere esily she sat,
Ywympled wel, and on her heed an hat
As brood as is a bokeler or a targe;
A foot mantel aboute hir hipes large,
And on hire feet a paire of spores sharpe.
In felaweshipe wel koude she laughe and carpe
Of remedies of love she knew perchaunce,
for she koude of that art the olde daunce.

The
Persoun

GOOD man was ther of religioun,
And was a povre Persoun of a toun;
But riche he was of hooly thought
and werk.

He was also a lerned man, a clerk
That Cristes Gospel trewely wolde
preche;

His parissshens devoutly wolde he teche.
Benygne he was, and wonder diligent,
And in adversitee ful pacient;
And swich he was yprevved ofte sithes.
ful looth were hym to cursen for his tithes,
But rather wolde he yeven, out of doute,
Unto his povre parissshens aboute
Of his offryng, and eek of his substaunce;
He koude in litel thyng have suffisaunce.
Wyde was his parisshe, and houses fer asonder,
But he ne laste nat for reyn ne thonder,
In siknesse nor in meschief to visite
The ferreste in his parisshe, muche and lite,
Upon his feet, and in his hand a staf.
This noble ensample to his sheepe he yaf
That first he wroghte, and afterward he taughte;
Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte;
And this figure he added eek therto,
That if gold ruste, what shal iren doo?
for if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,
No wonder is a lewed man to ruste;
And shame it is, if a preest take keepe,
A shiten shepherde and a clene sheepe.

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